

tended to. When they had done speaking, the steward said, " Your offer is accepted, and you shall be dealt with according to your own words; therefore, we will begin the search." So they immediately unloaded their beasts, and opened their sacks, one by one; beginning with the sack of the oldest, and so proceeding regularly down to the youngest. And when they came to Benjamin's sack, the cup was found. But who can describe the terror and distraction which instantly seized the whole company? they, who were just before rejoicing in their supposed innocence, are now detected with the strongest marks of guilt and infamy. And, although they were fully conscious, that they were not really the aggressors, yet, according to their own desire, they were now left without hope of being released themselves; and with the gloomy apprehension of breaking their father's heart by their delay. This may teach us, to be very cautious in justifying

ourselves by hasty expressions and wishes, before we are brought to the test, and our innocence proved; for our uncautious words may produce greater trouble than we can at present conceive of. But to return to our story. There now left no way for their escape; so turning back again with the steward, they went with distressed minds, and dejected appearance, to the steward; and were once more brought before Joseph: now in the capacity of criminals, who had no expectations left, but that of hearing a sentence of punishment from his lips, and to be immediately removed to suffer the execution of it.

Joseph now assumed all that dignity and anger in his appearance, which might bespeak offended greatness: and said, " What! had you not only been enough to rob me, but also ignorant enough to think I should not detect you? Do you think, a man of my station and character is

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